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The Unity of the University

Outline of an Address at the Celebration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Cincinnati Law School (University of Cincinnati), June 5, 1908

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The Unity of the University.

The germ idea in the university is unity. The first universities were societies of scholars banded together for the purpose of study and teaching—*"Universitates magistrorum et scholarium,"* their founders called them with great pride—united societies of masters and pupils, unions of schools to assist and protect each other in their rights.

The early universities were the first democratic societies, the first free societies formed in Europe during the second half of the Middle Ages. During the whole of the first part of this period men had been absorbed in looking back to the ancient world. At the end of the eleventh century they began to look forward to the future, to think and build for themselves; out of this mighty intellectual revolution the universities were born, and with them the modern period of liberty and learning.

As in their inception, the universities in their development have always represented the social necessities and the historical conditions of the times. Born with single faculties, as of theology at Paris, and of law at Bologna, they soon gathered together all the schools representing the learned professions of the times. The first four faculties of the historic university were those of philosophy, theology, medicine, and law. Representing the necessities of the new times, our modern university has added

a faculty of engineering and omitted, from the public institutions at least, that of theology. In all the centuries the university has been the chief expression of the needs of the higher life.

First of all, then, certain intrinsic conditions transform this outward co-ordination of the university into an organic unity; a unity founded in the common object of all the schools, the development of man and the improvement of human life through scientific study and professional practice. From both the historical and philosophical point of view, it is right, therefore, that all those whose studies have a common center of interest, the pursuit of knowledge, and who in later life must meet everywhere in the pursuit of a common service, should, while in the university, learn to know each other and to feel the mutuality of all their interests. To this end a number of things in the university contribute:

First: The investigators and teachers of all the faculties are organized in a homogeneous body, giving expression to the unity of the sciences, as well as their common purpose, to develop human life. The intercourse of specialists in the different departments has a broadening influence and is a great incentive. Philologist and philosopher, lawyer and physician, literary man and engineer, mutually influence one another and each challenges the other to look beyond the limits of his own science and to search for the universal and ultimate truth. The friendships of great scholars and scientific men have, as we know, been fruitful of splendid results.

On the other hand, it is well known that isolated professional schools produce narrow theologians, empirical physicians, mechanical lawyers. There can be no doubt that the Reformation, the beginning of all of our liberty, was the product of the mutual

influence of the students and professors of Erfurt and Wittenberg. A Luther could never have been born from a sectarian theological seminary. His historic protest, nailed to the church door, was the result of his free studies, in the universities.

This leads me to remark that the intercourse between the united schools is not less significant to the students than to the teachers. Though the different faculties be independent and co-ordinate, the intermingling and over-lapping of the courses can only be very beneficial to the students. Union facilitates the studies of all and makes easy the transfer of students from one faculty to another. The unity of the university, by inviting inspection and advice between the professors and teachers of the several colleges, makes it possible to see and correct mistakes. Social intercourse between students is in many cases the best part of college life, and the acquaintances made in college are not only beneficial at the time, but helpful in after life. It is in this way fraternities become more useful and friendships are cemented between the men of the different colleges that bring ever more power and pleasure with the years. Thus the unity of university education tends to give to the educated classes of the country that feeling of solidarity which is the beginning of democracy and the hope of brotherhood. A perfect democratic microcosmos, the modern university represents thus both the unity of the people and the leadership of the intellect. It is the very heart of the Republic and the foundation of advancement in government and industry, as well as in science and learning.

Secondly: The unity of the university is of vast importance, not only for the internal life of the teachers and students, but in the external position and value of an institution. The influence of the united faculties and student bodies is incomparably greater

than that of any single school. The university gives to every faculty and to every individual professor and student a distinct consciousness of relation and duty to the public, exalting ideals and increasing their courage. The graduate feels, the moment he enters on active work, that he belongs to a great fraternity, with its own historical life and its own principles and traditions, to direct and support him throughout his career. This gives the man not only learning and power, but also direction and steadiness in public service. The true university produces thus an *esprit de corps* which asserts itself against all bad causes and constantly extends its benign influence throughout the state. In Cincinnati we have a noble illustration of this. Everyone familiar with our recent civic development, and particularly with the admirable work of the various civic clubs and organizations of business and professional men, can testify to the fine influence exerted in them by the graduates of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, and our other universities, great and small. . . . . The upbuilding, the development of our public works and of our educational system, the beautification of our city, as well as the establishment of good government and civic righteousness in Cincinnati, will be largely the work of our college men. In this manner Cincinnati harvests the fruits of the work of the colleges all over the country. We give those colleges our thanks. But it would surely be ignoble for Cincinnati to depend upon other people and institutions to educate all her civic workers. We can not send all our youth away to college, and we owe a duty to the rest of the country. For this reason, if for no other, Cincinnati must have her own university to do its share of this work of training citizens for the service of her own community and of the whole Republic.

All institutions exist for the advancement of mankind. They are the agents that carry the world along in the great evolutionary process. The true university exists for life, the life of the living present and the life of the future. It is not for pleasure, or even for culture or art merely, but for the advancement of the life of men. The old classical college was composed of a company of scholars that lived in a cloister within a wall and invited a few select young men to come and study with them. The true university welcomes every soul who needs its help and can use it. The old college taught its students certain philosophies and theologies for the purpose of making them agents for their propaganda. The university is a place where "any man or woman can study anything," in preparation for service in the world.

Now isolated professional schools are even more sterile than the literary colleges. They have no college spirit and, therefore, develop no public spirit in their students. Society in them is too limited, the point of view too narrow, the course too cramping, the contact too little, with the result that the students are swallowed up in the city and have no life of their own. Only in a true university can there be that development of ideas in common which gives the soul of the corporation the distinctive character and the reproductive instinct of the true organism.

What, finally, is our conception of the university? It is as the brain of the body politic, made up, indeed, of several parts with different functions, but all working together for the good of the whole body. One part is designed to stimulate the intellectual life, another the political life, and still another the industrial life, but as the body, which they serve, is one, so these organs are one. The true university is, thus, the one great stimu-

lating and directing organ of the complete organism we call society.

Applying these principles, now, to our own institution, I think we may congratulate ourselves on the progress already made in its unification. In fact, the University of Cincinnati has been made up almost entirely of parts at one time separate, and the present prosperity of its colleges is an illustration of the power that comes through union. The Cincinnati College and Law School, whose anniversary we celebrate today, the Ohio Medical College, the Astronomical Society and the McMicken College, now the heart of the University, were all, at one time, separate institutions, and all have done noble service for this community. Fortunately we now have the laws under which we can get the means to give a physical expression to this unity. Let us rejoice in the union of these colleges, and expect still more splendid results from their association in the University. In this sincere faith and this assured hope, let us all labour to build up each of our constituent colleges, and to unite them perfectly in one noble University, which shall become the head of the industrial and social, the educational and intellectual life of this great city.

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